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# “2020 VISION”

## PENN SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE UCC

**Conference Vision**— a unified portion of the Body of Christ moving in one direction to effect for God and for good the lives of all people living in Southeast Pennsylvania.

**Conference Mission**— strengthen local churches and pastors by making the seven Associations of the Penn Southeast Conference agencies of connection and accountability.

**Conference Objectives**-- Keeping Jesus and the gospel at the heart of everything we do, by 2020 we will create an ethos of expectation, experimentation and transformation by:

### Already In Process:

1. Offering 4 Conference-wide vitality training experiences;
2. Offering 3 spiritual retreat opportunities for clergy (i.e. Women’s Retreat, Men’s Retreat, Clergy and Spouses Retreat)
3. Through 4 annual training events, instituting the Manual on Ministry as the normative practice for Church and Ministry committee work in the Conference;
4. Offer web connection capacity for at least ½ of the conference meetings hosted at the conference office.

### For Discernment...

5. Turning our churches inside out: to focus on community transformation as much as church growth. We want to see 5 cities or towns being positively affected by the presence of a UCC church as measured by the quality of life standards of those communities;

*Would need 2-4 people in each Association trained to go into congregation to help determine pain points in community and interpret MissionInsite and other information.*

*These people would also need to know how to connect church with resources within their own communities.*

6. Preparing for the birth of six new vital spiritual communities through recruitment of excellent entrepreneurial leaders to lead the effort, recruiting partner churches to provide support and infrastructure, and raising funding to adequately empower the movement;

*Conference would need to help identify places to plant new churches. Conference would need to help ID people already doing entrepreneurial leadership. These leaders could be a resource to find others and to help create a plan. Would need a lot of money. People to go to thriving congregations to ask for support new ministries with dollars and with people.*

*What if each Association were to start one new church plant. Have Association support and provide infrastructure. Pastors starting these new church plants would need spiritual and emotional support. Pastors would also need financial stability.*

*Then the conversation turned to why start a new church? Might it be better to access the need in the community and provide that need first then a faith community would form? Or have the new churches have specialties such as a church for families with special needs children.*

*Access need first, then plant. Goals 5 & 6 began to blur.*

7. Increasing OCWM pledges from the 169 churches of the Penn SE Conference 2% each year through 2020;

*Change to incremental increase over several years. EDUCATION is needed in our churches and also for our clergy to explain what is OCWM.*

A team is needed that is educated on this matter to spread the word.

8. Remembering that church growth is a byproduct of a vital spiritual community, we will connect local congregations to training, inspirational experiences, networking opportunities and resources with the goal of increasing active participation in our churches by 10%.
9. Encouraging every pastor in the conference to be in an accountability and support group with three other clergy;
10. Creating a Member In Discernment Academy to standardize the training of potential clergy in the essentials of ministry in the Penn SE Conference;
11. Identifying and resourcing at least 5 congregations who want to experiment with new ministry models and collaborative partnerships;

*Resources: Association church and ministry committees, the associate conference minister to identify these congregations and to identify leaders who are eager to think outside of the box.*

*Also identify where this was worked in other churches and seek input from those churches leaders and congregations. Fund these endeavors using new church start money.*

12. Developing a strategy and beginning conversations with 5 congregations nearing the end of their life together to explore the investment of their legacy gifts in the starting of new ministries in the conference;

*We saw a 4 part process:*

*The associate Conference Minister would identify those churches.*

*A pastoral counselor or grief counselor would work with the congregation to develop rituals to process institutional loss. Wanda Craner may be a resource for this.*

*The Associate Conference minister or her designated person would share the possibilities of where the legacy gift could possibly be used.*

*Someone would need to talk a congregation through the legal and financial nuts and bolts.*

13. Identifying at least two social justice issues impacting the communities in our conference, offering prophetic witness through op-ed pieces, protest rallies, social media campaigns, member education and all other effective means for the advancement of just and generous Christian values;

*We thought these activities should target the broadest conference support as possible with a special emphasis of addressing issues and activities that will be especially appealing to the 14-30 year old demographics. The issues should have action oriented possibilities. We also thought it would be important to work these issues into Christian ed curriculum. Two issues that we thought might fit these parameters are racism/white privilege and environmental justice and witness.*

14. Strengthening the covenantal connections between local churches and the conference as evidenced by a 20% increase in attendance at Conference sponsored events, especially Annual Meeting;

- *If two day, then bring outside professional praise team in, have scholarships to help people in need.*

- *Focus on best practices around the conference, break out to workshops of interest to individuals.*

15. Reshaping the Annual Meeting experience to communicate our ethos of expectation, experimentation and transformation further enhanced by the introducing webcasting;

*Would we consider those attending through webcast part of the 20% increase? How would the webcast impact our fellowshipping? Webcasting and community transformation--maybe they could go together, given the high usage of the web by younger folk nowadays. Annual meetings have to be exciting! Quality over quantity in everything (in order to build excitement and expectation).*

16. Lay a foundation for at least two ministry hubs in ethnically diverse urban-centers of the conference;

*Breaking down the racial segregation on Sunday mornings. Association meetings being interracial. No speaker. Breaking out into groups around scriptures and questions having to do with improving the associations. Developing connections among racially distinct churches (associations could be the hub)? Encouraging interaction, sharing between churches (switching pastors, doing potlucks together, etc).*

Together, we now shift the narrative of Mainline decline to a story of hope for a generative future. We are the model for those seeking transformation in their denominational settings across this nation. We believe in the God of resurrection, and in God we place our faith and hope.

Let us begin...

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